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ABSTRACT

The federal Even Start program was implemented to improve the educational opportunities of low-income children and adults by integrating early childhood education, adult education, and parent education into a unified family literacy initiative. Because children's first formal educational experiences may significantly influence the course of their schooling, a study was undertaken to identify promising transition-to-school strategies implemented by Even Start projects. The study had three objectives: (1) to document and describe strategies used by Even Start to smooth children's transitions to kindergarten; (2) to identify the most effective of these strategies; and (3) to provide data and recommendations that can be used to improve the design of transition strategies. To meet these objectives, the literature on transition to kindergarten was reviewed, descriptive data were collected on Even Start projects operating in program year 1993-94, and qualitative data were obtained through site visits to five projects with potentially promising transition strategies. Based on these data, this report describes successful program characteristics and discusses impacts of programs on the parent-child relationship and the literacy environment of the home. The prekindergarten experiences of Even Start children in five projects are also described. The continuity of these children's experience is then discussed by comparing the characteristics of their kindergarten programs with their prekindergarten programs. The report then describes a variety of services for parents and children designed to help smooth the transition to kindergarten and discusses barriers to implementing these strategies. Based on the study's findings, the report makes the following recommendations for Even Start programs: (1) provide intensive parenting education; (2) maintain close contact with all of the prekindergarten programs serving Even Start children; and (3) provide transition services that facilitate interactions among parents, project staff, and preschool and kindergarten teachers. (Contains 29 references, 1 appendix, and 11 tables.) (LPP)

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Even Start: Facilitating Transitions to Kindergarten

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EVEN START:
FACILITATING TRANSITIONS
TO KINDERGARTEN

1997

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Because of the recognition that children's first school experiences may significantly influence the course of their schooling, there is a growing literature that addresses the significance of the transition to kindergarten (see for example, Stief 1994). Responding to the interest in the transition to kindergarten, the Department of Education (ED) requested a study, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), to document promising approaches implemented by Even Start projects across the country in the effort to facilitate smooth transitions to kindergarten. Even Start is a federally funded family literacy program that was instituted in 1989 to ". . . improve the educational opportunities of the Nation's children and adults by integrating early childhood education and adult education for parents into a unified program." (P.L. 100-297, Sec. 1051). This report presents MPR's findings from the study. Its purpose is to describe practices of Even Start projects that have been used to smooth children's transitions to kindergarten.

The Even Start Program has three interrelated goals: (1) to help parents become full partners in their children's education, (2) to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners, and (3) to provide literacy training for participating parents. To meet these goals, Even Start projects coordinate the provision of early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education. Entities eligible to receive Even Start grants for the program year covered in this study were either (1) local education agencies (LEAs) applying in collaboration with a community-based organization, public agency, institution of higher education, or other nonprofit organization or (2) community-based organizations or other nonprofit organizations of demonstrated quality applying in collaboration with an LEA.[1] Eligible Even Start participants in the year of this study were adults who were eligible for participation in an adult education program under the Adult Education Act and their children, age seven or younger, who lived in a Title I elementary school attendance area.[2] Families must participate in all three of the program components.

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[1]Under a set-aside, the Department of Education in the year of this study also made direct grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations, state educational agencies for migrant projects, and the outlying areas. Beginning in 1995, grants also were authorized for statewide family literacy initiatives, and for a project in a prison that houses women and children.

[2]The Even Start Program was reauthorized by the Improving America's Schools Acts of 1994 (P.L. 103-382). A number of changes were made to the program statute, including changes to the eligibility requirements, as described in the report.

STUDY DESIGN

The study had three objectives:

- To document and describe transition strategies used by Even Start projects;
- To identify which of these strategies are likely to be effective in that they provide continuity of experience for children as they move from home or prekindergarten programs to kindergarten; and
- To provide data and recommendations that ED, other federal agencies, and early childhood and parenting educators can use to improve the design of transition strategies used by Even Start and other family literacy and early childhood programs.

These objectives translate into four research questions that guided our data collection and analysis efforts.

- How do Even Start projects support children's transitions to kindergarten?
- What strategies are perceived by those involved in the transition process as effective, or particularly successful, in smoothing children's transitions to kindergarten?
- What are the characteristics of the projects that implement these successful strategies?
- What are the major barriers to implementing these successful transition strategies?

To address the research questions, the study reviewed the vast amount of literature on transitions to kindergarten and analyzed the following two types of data:

- Descriptive data collected on all Even Start projects operating in program year 1993-94 for the Even Start Information System (ESIS), as part of the second national evaluation of the Even Start program; and
- Qualitative data obtained through site visits to five Even Start projects with potentially promising transition strategies.

The literature review identified several factors related to the home environment, participation in a prekindergarten program, and continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments that affect how children adjust to school. These factors were used to identify projects in the ESIS database with potentially promising transition strategies. Among those, five projects were selected for

visits in June 1995. During the site visits, the research team interviewed project staff, parents, and preschool and school personnel about children's transitions to kindergarten.

STUDY FINDINGS

How Do Even Start Projects Support Children's Transitions to Kindergarten?

In many ways, the main components of the Even Start program are well positioned to support children's transitions to kindergarten. According to the literature, children's transitions are influenced by their home environment, the prekindergarten programs they attend, if any, and the degree of continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments. The three required components of Even Start projects--early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education--directly influence children's home environments and prekindergarten experiences by providing parenting education instruction, facilitating and supervising joint parent-child activities, enrolling parents in their own literacy or adult basic activities, and enrolling children in quality prekindergarten programs. Although Even Start projects are not required to establish continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments, the children's continued participation in the program during that period (they are eligible for the program until they are eight years old) provides continuity in the support system created by the project.

In addition to program components that are required of Even Start projects, the projects visited had implemented the services specifically designed to support families as the children make the transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten. These included accompanying Even Start families to school-related transition activities such as kindergarten orientation, working closely with parents to educate them about the transition and to empower them to act as their children's advocates, and meeting with school staff to discuss entering children's needs and strengths as they pertain to the kindergarten experience.

What Strategies Are Perceived by Those Involved in the Transition Process as Effective or Particularly Successful in Smoothing the Transition?

When project staff were asked to describe the strategies that are most successful in smoothing children's transitions, they did not describe the program components or transition services described above. Instead, they discussed approaches they use in working with families, which help families stay in the program and take advantage of its services, including those related to the transition to kindergarten. The four approaches consistently mentioned as being successful are: (1) emphasizing families' strengths rather than their weaknesses in all interactions, (2) establishing and maintaining long-term trusting relationships with families, (3) empowering families by helping them to identify and address their needs rather than telling them what they need and providing them with prescribed services, and (4) being flexible in the provision of services so that families in different circumstances can participate in the program. Together, these approaches enable families to feel, sometimes for the first time, important, respected, supported, and hopeful. Developing these feelings in families, project staff believe, is the most important service they can provide because it makes families more receptive, and therefore more responsive to, the program.

What Are the Characteristics of Projects That Implement Successful Strategies?

The site selection process for this study was geared toward identifying five projects that individually had potentially successful transition strategies and, as a group, would provide the greatest diversity in terms of project characteristics. Because of the small sample, however, it is difficult to fully assess the types of projects that implement successful transition strategies. Within our sample, characteristics common among the projects are a local school board that is supportive of early childhood education, a close link with programs such as Head Start and city or state prekindergarten programs, and low turnover among project staff.

What Are the Major Barriers to Implementing Successful Transition Strategies?

Certain aspects of participating families' homes and lifestyles can make it difficult to enhance the home environment or to increase participation in the project or at school. At times, project staff must enter unsafe neighborhoods in order to conduct a home visit, they may encounter parents who abuse drugs or alcohol, and they can have a difficult time convincing parents who have had negative school-related experiences to attend project or school activities. In addition, Even Start families tend to move quite frequently, making it necessary for the children to change schools.

Characteristics of the school environment also can create discontinuity in children's experiences. Compared with prekindergarten programs, curricula in kindergartens are, in general, less likely to be developmentally appropriate--either because the schools have not adopted a standardized curriculum that is developmentally appropriate or because the kindergarten teachers are resistant to implementing such a curriculum. Child/staff ratios tend to be higher in kindergarten than in prekindergarten programs, and school staff are not always amenable to visits from parents and their preschool children or to having parents participate in the kindergarten classrooms.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STRATEGIES

This study represents an important first step in identifying and documenting potentially successful transition strategies. The report presents three recommendations for the design of transition strategies, based on an analysis of the promising strategies used by five Even Start projects.

- ***Provide Intensive Parenting Education***. Because parenting styles are difficult to change, project staff should provide intensive parenting instruction, preferably over a long period of time. Lasting behavior changes are more likely to take place through a parenting education component that is implemented every day through many different types of activities than through programs in which parenting education is offered less frequently.

- ***Maintain Close Contact with All of the Prekindergarten Programs Serving Even Start Children***. Project staff should maintain close contact with all of the prekindergarten programs serving Even Start children to ensure that all children receive the same high-quality care. This can be more difficult for projects in which children participate in several different prekindergarten programs. Compared with the staff of projects in which children participate in one or two prekindergarten programs, the staff of these projects were less knowledgeable about and involved with each of the programs and had less contact with some children than with others.

- ***Provide Transition Services that Facilitate Interactions Among Parents, Project Staff, Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers***. Based on staff perceptions, particularly successful services include taking prekindergarten children to visit their kindergarten classrooms, educating school personnel about entering children, especially with regard to the children's developmental progress in preschool and teaching methods that have been successful with them, and facilitating parents' involvement in their children's school through activities such as volunteering in the their children's kindergarten classrooms.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	A. STUDY'S PURPOSE AND DESIGN	1
	1. Purpose of Study	1
	2. Study Design and Limitations	2
	B. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE	3
	1. The Home Environment	3
	2. Prekindergarten Programs	3
	3. Providing Continuity	4
	C. THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM	5
	D. PROJECTS SELECTED FOR SITE VISITS	6
	E. ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT	11
II	SETTING THE FOUNDATION FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS	13
	A. USING A POSITIVE APPROACH	13
	B. ESTABLISHING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS	14
	C. ASSESSING FAMILIES' NEEDS	14
	D. BEING FLEXIBLE	14
III	IMPACTS OF THE EVEN START PROGRAM ON THE HOME ENVIRONMENT	17
	A. PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIPS	17
	1. Modeling	17
	2. Parenting Instruction	18
	3. Parents and Children Together (PACT) Time	18

CONTENTS *(continued)*

B. LITERACY ENVIRONMENT OF THE HOME 19

1. Getting Literacy Materials into the Home 19
2. Adult Literacy Instruction 20

IV PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM EXPERIENCE OF EVEN START CHILDREN 21

A. TYPES OF PROGRAMS 21

B. PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS 22

V PROVIDING CONTINUITY 23

A. CONTINUITY IN PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS 23

B. TRANSITION SERVICES: EFFORTS TO EASE THE TRANSITION ... 24

1. Kindergarten Orientation/Visits to Kindergarten Classrooms 24
2. Preparation for Parents 25
3. Transfer of Records 25
4. Educating School Personnel About Entering Children 26
5. Post-Transition Follow-Up 26
6. Joint Planning and/or Training 27
7. Summer Activities 27

VI BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES THAT IMPROVE TRANSITIONS 29

A. THE HOME ENVIRONMENT 29

B. PREKINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE 29

CONTENTS (*continued*)

C. PROVIDING CONTINUITY 30

1. Continuity in Programs 30
2. Implementing Transition Services 32

VII CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 33

A. CONCLUSIONS 33

1. How Do Even Start Projects Support Children's Transitions to Kindergarten? 33
2. What Strategies Are Perceived by Those Involved in the Transition Process as Effective or Particularly Successful in Smoothing the Transition? 34
3. What Are the Characteristics of Projects That Implement Successful Strategies? 34
4. What Are the Major Barriers to Implementing Successful Transition Strategies? 35

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STRATEGIES 35

1. Provide Intensive Parenting Education 35
2. Maintain Close Contact with All of the Prekindergarten Programs Serving Even Start Children 36
3. Provide Transition Services That Facilitate Interactions Among Parents, Project Staff, Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers 36

REFERENCES 39

APPENDIX A: SELECTING PROJECTS FOR SITE VISITS

TABLES

Table		Page
I.1	SELECTED TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED BY SITE VISIT PROJECTS	7
I.2	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULA OF THE SITE VISIT PROJECTS	8
I.3	SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF SITE VISIT PROJECTS	9

I. INTRODUCTION

If a person were stopped at random on a city street and asked about her experience in kindergarten, it is likely that, in comparison with her current circumstances, she would remember a carefree, happy time. If her memory is very good, however, she may also remember the experience as being challenging and somewhat stressful. In fact, children's first school experiences have been the focus of a vast amount of research and public policy dialogue because they represent a critical period in the lives of children. Kindergarten is often considered the first step on the ladder of formal education, and educators, parents, and policymakers want to ensure as well as they can that this is a step over which children will not stumble. Because of its importance and the recognition that children's initial adjustment to kindergarten could influence the course of their schooling, there is a growing literature that addresses the significance of the transition to kindergarten. For example, a recent report of the National Governors' Association (Stief 1994) challenges the nation's governors to address and facilitate children's transitions to kindergarten.

Responding to this interest in the transition to kindergarten, the Department of Education (ED) requested a study, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), to document promising approaches implemented by Even Start projects across the country in the effort to facilitate smooth transitions to kindergarten. Even Start is a federally funded family literacy program that was instituted in 1989. It was designed to ". . . improve the educational opportunities of the Nation's children and adults by integrating early childhood education and adult education for parents into a unified program." (P.L. 100-297, Sec. 1051).

This report presents MPR's findings from the study. Its purpose is to describe practices of Even Start projects that have helped to smooth children's transitions to kindergarten. It is hoped that all Even Start projects, as well as other early care and education programs, can use the information in this report to develop successful transition strategies for the children they serve. In this introductory chapter, we discuss the design and purpose of the study, summarize the research literature on children's transitions to school, describe the Even Start program, and explain the report's organization.

A. STUDY'S PURPOSE AND DESIGN

1. Purpose of Study

The study has three objectives:

- To document and describe transition strategies used by Even Start projects;
- To identify which of these strategies are likely to be effective in that they provide continuity of experience for children as they move from home or prekindergarten programs to kindergarten; and
- To provide data and recommendations that ED, other federal agencies, and early childhood and parenting educators can use to improve the design of transition strategies used by Even Start and other family literacy and early childhood programs.

These objectives translate into the following four research questions, which guided our data collection and analysis efforts.

- How do Even Start projects support children's transitions to kindergarten?
- What strategies are perceived by those involved in the transition process as effective, or particularly successful, in smoothing children's transitions to kindergarten?
- What are the characteristics of the projects that implement these successful strategies?
- What are the major barriers to implementing these successful transition strategies?

2. Study Design and Limitations

To address the research questions, the study reviewed the vast amount of literature on transitions to kindergarten and analyzed the following two types of data:

- Descriptive data collected on all Even Start projects operating in program year 1993-94 for the Even Start Information System (ESIS), as part of the second national evaluation of the Even Start program; and
- Qualitative data obtained through site visits to five Even Start projects with potentially promising transition strategies.

The literature review identified several factors that affect how children adjust to school, based on quantitative data analysis and/or widely held beliefs of early childhood practitioners. These factors were used to distinguish projects in the ESIS database with potentially promising transition strategies. Among those, we selected five projects to visit in June 1995. (The site selection process is described in detail in Appendix A.) During the site visits, we interviewed project staff, parents, and preschool and school personnel about children's transitions to kindergarten.

Although this study design can identify factors associated with successful transitions, it cannot statistically verify or measure those relationships. In particular, both of our primary data sources, the ESIS data and qualitative data collected during site visits, have shortcomings that create limitations for the study. The ESIS data are useful in that they contain information on all Even Start projects that operated during the 1993 to 1994 program year, but they have limited information about the projects' approaches to children's transitions. In addition, the amount of information about transitions varies quite a bit by project. On the other hand, although the site visits provided us with rich information about transitions, that information pertains only to the five study sites. Because of these limitations, conclusions about the success or effectiveness of transition strategies used by Even Start projects based on this analysis are preliminary rather than definitive. Nevertheless, this study is an important first step in learning more about the prevalence and effectiveness of transition services in the Even Start program.

B. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

The literature on transitions to kindergarten was reviewed for this study in Allin and Love (1995b). The studies reviewed focused primarily on the impact of certain characteristics of the home environment on children's kindergarten experience, the impact of prekindergarten programs, and the need for and ways to achieve continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments. We summarize the findings of that review here.

1. The Home Environment

The interactions between parents and children can significantly affect children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Consequently, how a parent relates to a child can have a tremendous impact on his or her ability to adjust to the social and intellectual demands of kindergarten. Studies have found that children whose parents are less controlling, exhibit a more positive affect, and adopt an authoritative, rather than authoritarian or permissive, parenting style are likely to be more socially competent than children whose parents do not behave in these ways (Barth and Parke 1993; Demarest et al. 1993; Baumrind 1973). To encourage social development, it is important that, among other things, parents respect and listen to their children, facilitate interactions between their children and other children of the same age and other adults, model the qualities they would like to see in their children, and let them know that they are loved unconditionally (see, for example, U.S. Department of Education 1992a).

A child's intellectual competence is positively associated with the following parental attitudes and behaviors: a belief that children should play an active role in their own development, accurate judgments of children's abilities, teaching styles that emphasize inquiry and fit the child's developmental level, and high, but realistic, expectations about children's achievement (Powell 1991, citing several previous studies; Hess et al. 1984; Alexander and Entwistle 1988; Scott-Jones 1984). Parents can also affect their children's cognitive development by reading to them frequently, making reading materials available to them, and monitoring their television viewing (see, for example, U.S. Department of Education 1992a; Powell 1991).

2. Prekindergarten Programs

Research also indicates that whether children participate in a prekindergarten program and what kind of program it is strongly influence children's experiences in kindergarten. First, participating in a preschool program makes the adjustment to kindergarten easier. Ladd and Price (1987) found that children who had more preschool experience exhibited fewer anxious behaviors during the first few weeks of kindergarten than children with little or no preschool experience. This is probably due to the fact that children who have participated in a preschool program have already experienced many of the stressful aspects of entering kindergarten, such as playing with unfamiliar children, being separated from their parents for several hours at a time, and interacting with new adults.

Second, the *type* of preschool program in which a child participates can affect her experience in kindergarten. Specifically, many early childhood practitioners strongly advocate the use of a developmentally appropriate approach in programs for young children, rather than an academic one. An academic approach is based on teacher-directed activities through which children are required to learn a predetermined set of skills, whereas a developmentally appropriate approach emphasizes child-initiated and directed activities that facilitate active involvement in the learning process (Bredekamp 1987). The same qualities in children that are fostered through positive, noncontrolling, authoritative

parenting, such as self-confidence, self-control, curiosity, and cooperation, are believed to be fostered through developmentally appropriate practices (Greenberg 1990). This belief is substantiated by recent studies reporting that children learn more and exhibit fewer anxious behaviors in classrooms adhering to a developmentally appropriate approach (Marcon 1994; Burts et al. 1990, 1992).

3. Providing Continuity

Although early childhood practitioners argue that in some instances an appropriate degree of discontinuity can stimulate a child's learning (see, for example, Peters and Kontos 1987), many others argue that children will benefit when there is continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments. If there is continuity between the two environments, "the behaviors children learn in the first setting will be appropriate in the second, and adults will respond to children in the second setting in ways that are consistent with expectations established in the first" (Love et al. 1992).

Studies have shown, however, that the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments can be very different. Compared to prekindergarten programs, kindergarten programs are more likely to use a curriculum with an academic, rather than a developmentally appropriate, emphasis and to have higher child/staff ratios. They are less likely to consistently and fully involve parents in their children's education (Seppanen et al. 1993). Thus, one way to facilitate improved learning is to create more continuity between the two environments by making them more similar in ways that are important for children's learning and development. Based on information about how children learn, many early childhood experts argue that the best way to create continuity between the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten environments is for kindergarten programs to emphasize characteristics more commonly associated with prekindergarten programs, such as developmentally appropriate practices, parental involvement, and lower child/staff ratios (Marcon 1994; National Association of Elementary School Principals 1990; National Association for the Education of Young Children 1990).

Many early childhood practitioners also believe that activities and services designed to bridge the gap between different sending and receiving environments can help to create continuity, although there are no quantitative analyses to measure their effect on transitions (see, for example, Administration for Children, Youth and Families 1986). Examples of these services include taking preschool students and their parents to meet the children's kindergarten teachers, facilitating communication and information-sharing among preschool and kindergarten teachers, and educating parents and children about what to expect in kindergarten.

C. THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM[1]

The Even Start Family Literacy Program was authorized as Title I, Chapter I, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, (ESEA) as amended by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, (P.L. 100-297).[2] As a family literacy program, Even Start has three interrelated goals: (1) to help parents become full partners in their children's education, (2) to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners, and (3) to provide literacy or basic education training for participating parents. To meet these goals, Even Start projects coordinate the provision of early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education. Families must participate in all three of these components. Individual projects have substantial flexibility in designing their programs to meet the needs of participating families, as long as they meet certain requirements such as providing some services to parents and children together and making support services--for example, transportation and child care--available to the families.

Since fiscal year 1992, when appropriations for Even Start surpassed $50 million, the Department of Education has made formula grants to states, which have then made discretionary subgrants to "eligible entities." For the program year covered by this study, eligible entities were either (1) local education agencies (LEAs) applying in collaboration with a community-based organization, public agency, institution of higher education, or other nonprofit organization or (2) community-based organizations or other nonprofit organizations of demonstrated quality applying in collaboration with an LEA.[3] Community-based organizations have been able to apply for Even Start grants only since 1992, when the program regulations were amended to reflect statutory changes contained in the National Literacy Act of 1991 (P.L. 102-73).

Under the statute in effect during the program year covered by this study, those considered to be eligible Even Start participants were adults who were eligible for participation in an adult education program under the Adult Education Act and their children age seven or younger who lived in a Chapter 1 (now Title I) elementary school attendance area. Individual projects could further target their services. For example, some projects could elect only to serve families with children age two or younger.

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[1]The following description of the Even Start Program draws from three sources which were in effect during the program year covered by this study: the Even Start Family Literacy Program Nonregulatory Guidance (U.S. Department of Education 1992b), the Even Start Family Literacy Program Statute (20 USC 2741-2749), and the final regulations for the Even Start Family Literacy Program (34 CFR Part 212, U.S. Department of Education 1992c).

[2]The program was reauthorized by the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-382), as Part B, Title I of the ESEA, 20 U.S.C. 6361-6370. Changes in the reauthorized program include the extension of eligibility to teen parents who are otherwise not eligible for adult education, the requirement that projects provide services for children at least within a three-year age range and that they operate year-round, and the removal of the requirement that participants reside in a Title I attendance area. Projects must, however, serve areas of highly concentrated poverty, and must select most-in-need participants on the basis of poverty level and low-literacy level, in addition to other need-related factors.

[3]Under a set-aside, the Department of Education also makes direct grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations, state educational agencies for migrant projects, and the outlying areas.

Although Even Start projects can provide services to families directly, they must collaborate with, rather than replace or compete with, programs that already address the specific needs of the eligible population, such as those funded under the Title I LEA program, the Job Training Partnership Act, or Head Start. According to the authorizing legislation then in effect (P.L. 100-297, Sec. 1051), "the program shall be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services.[4]" During the 1991-92 program year, Even Start projects most often provided parenting services directly and referred families to collaborating agencies for adult and early childhood education (St. Pierre et al. 1993).

Data from the first national evaluation of Even Start indicate that, during the 1991-92 program year, about half of the participating families were composed of a couple with children, whereas single-parent households accounted for about 40 percent of participating families (St. Pierre et al. 1993). Most families had annual household incomes under $10,000; half reported government assistance as a primary source of income, and another half reported wages as a primary income source. Eighty percent of families included three or fewer children, and most of the children were age five or younger. Finally, almost two-thirds of the participating children reportedly had no formal education experience (including Head Start and other preschool programs) before their participation in Even Start.

D. PROJECTS SELECTED FOR SITE VISITS

The findings of this study are based on information collected during site visits to five Even Start projects. To select which five we would visit, we examined data from the Even Start Information System (ESIS) and obtained recommendations from persons knowledgeable about the Even Start Program. (The site selection process is described in detail in Appendix A). The objective of the site selection process was to identify five projects with promising transition strategies that, as a group, provided the greatest diversity in terms of location, type of co-sponsoring agency (that is, the agency sponsoring the program with the LEA), curriculum used, and so on. The projects we selected for the study are described below, with our rationales for including them. Characteristics of these projects are presented in tables I.1, I.2, and I.3.

- ***Kalamazoo Even Start***. This project is the only project selected for site visits that, according to the ESIS data, provides all seven of the transition services we examined.[5] Located in Kalamazoo, Michigan, it is primarily a home-based project that targets families in which there is a child under 3 years and the mother is 25 years or younger. Most participating children of preschool age attend Head Start or the state prekindergarten for at-risk children.

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[4]The same requirement exists in the recently reauthorized legislation. (P.L. 103-382, Sec. 1201 (1)).

[5]As described in Appendix A, we based our selection process on the seven potentially successful transition strategies listed in table I.1.

TABLE I.1

SELECTED TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED BY SITE VISIT PROJECTS

Project Name	State	Number of Selected Services Provided	Encourage/ Facilitate Parents' Involvement in School	Have Even Start Staff Work as Intermediaries for Children and Families	Facilitate Children's Visit to Kindergarten Classroom	Facilitate Meetings Among Parents and Kindergarten Teachers	Foster Coordination/Communication Among Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and Even Start Staff	Transfer Student Records to Receiving Teachers	Provide Joint Inservice Training
Kalamazoo Even Start	MI	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Even Start "Links to Literacy"	NH	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Yonkers Even Start*	NY	3	✓			✓	✓		
Carman-Ainsworth Even Start	MI	6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Asheville City Schools (ACS) Preschool and Family Literacy Center	NC	4	✓	✓		✓	✓		

SOURCE: Even Start Information System (ESIS) project-level data for PY93-94. The seven transition services listed in this table are ones that we identified as potentially successful (see Appendix A). Projects have an "X" under those services which where mentioned in their response to an open-ended ESIS question about transition services.

*This project has more than one site. We have included information on the site that appeared to have the most transition services.

TABLE I.2

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULA OF THE SITE VISIT PROJECTS

Project Name	Degree to Which Project's Curriculum Exhibits these Characteristics:[a]		
	Individualized (Rather than Standardized)	Emphasizes Group Activities (Rather than Working Alone)	Emphasizes Learner-Selected (Rather than Instructor-Selected) Activities
Kalamazoo Even Start	High	Medium/Low	Medium
Even Start "Links to Literacy"	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/Low
Yonkers Even Start[b]	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/Low
Carman-Ainsworth Even Start	Medium	Medium/High	Medium
ACS Preschool and Family Literacy Center	High	Medium	Medium

SOURCE: Even Start Information System (ESIS) project-level data for PY93-94.

[a]Projects with developmentally appropriate practices should rank their curricula as more individualized than standardized and emphasize learner-selected rather than instructor-selected activities. They would probably provide a mixture of group activities and activities children do alone.

[b]This project has more than one site. We have included information on the site that appeared to have the most transition services.

TABLE I.3

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF SITE VISIT PROJECTS

Project Name	Type of Co-Sponsoring Agency	Even Start Grant for First Year	Rural/Urban Community	Anticipated Number of Families Served in PY93-94	Number of Families on Waiting List	Program Model(s)	Head Start's Level of Involvement
Kalamazoo Even Start	Other community-based organization[1]	$162,528	Metro area-central city	25	0	High/Scope, Parents as Partners in Reading, PAT,[2] Portage home teaching, locally developed model	Secondary service provider
Even Start "Links to Literacy"	Head Start	$130,789	Entire metro area	35	70	High/Scope, Kenan Trust, locally developed model, Head Start	Secondary service provider
Yonkers Even Start[3]	Other preschool or day care program	$369,347	Entire metro area	207	0	HIPPY, Kenan Trust, locally developed model, other model or program	No involvement
Carman-Ainsworth Even Start	Community college, college, or university	$144,471	Non-metro area	58	5	High/Scope, locally developed model	Primary service provider
ACS Preschool and Family Literacy Center	Community college, college, or university	$98,608	Metro area-central city	50	10	High/Scope, PAT	No involvement

SOURCE: Even Start Information System (ESIS) project-level data for PY93-94.

[1]Advocacy group, women's shelter, ethnic or cultural group, or community action group.
[2]Parents as Teachers
[3]This project has six sites.

- ***Even Start "Links to Literacy."*** This project, located in Manchester, New Hampshire, is the only project selected for a visit that collaborates with a Head Start project as a co-sponsor. The project is both home based and center based. Most participating preschool children attend Head Start or a preschool operated by the Even Start program staff.

- ***Yonkers Even Start.*** Because most of the projects we selected use a curriculum modeled after High/Scope, we wanted to visit one project that uses the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). According to the ESIS data, of the projects recommended to us by a HIPPY representative, the Yonkers, New York and Long Beach, California Unified School District projects have implemented the most transition services. We selected the Yonkers project because it reported having implemented some of the less common services, such as facilitating meetings among teachers and parents. This project is primarily school based. At the time of our visit, six public schools participated in the project, and all of them have full-day prekindergarten programs.

- ***Carman-Ainsworth Even Start.*** Only two of the projects identified through the ESIS are located in non-metropolitan areas--Carman-Ainsworth in Michigan and Family Literacy Opportunities Resources (FLOR) Even Start in California. Although both projects appear to have good transition strategies, we selected the Carman-Ainsworth project because (1) it is the only project for which Head Start is a primary service provider[6] and (2) it is one of two projects (the other is Kalamazoo) that indicate that they provide joint inservice training, which is identified in the research literature as a successful transition service. The Carman-Ainsworth project is both home- and center-based. Project staff developed four semesters of a home-based curriculum through which participating adults can receive adult education.

- ***Asheville City Schools (ACS) Preschool and Family Literacy Center.*** The ACS project and the Pinellas project were recommended to us by the Even Start state directors of North Carolina and Florida, respectively. For that reason, we wanted to visit one of them. Although both projects had good transition strategies, we selected the ACS project because it listed more of our selected transition services (four compared with three). The Asheville project is primarily center based. Children attend the city preschool while their parents attend adult education and parenting classes in the same building.

During our two-day visits to each of these projects (conducted in June 1995), we spoke with project staff, Even Start parents, prekindergarten teachers and administrators, and at least one school principal. During two of the site visits, we were also able to speak with kindergarten teachers. In addition, we obtained copies of project documents relevant to the study. After the visits were completed, site visit reports were written for each project and submitted to the project director for comments to ensure that our descriptions of the projects were accurate.

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[6]The New Hampshire project lists Head Start as a co-sponsoring agency but indicates that Head Start is a secondary, rather than a primary, service provider.

E. ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Before we begin discussing how the five projects that were visited address children's transitions, we outline some basic approaches identified by the staff of the selected projects as crucial to the success of their programs (Chapter II). These approaches affect the way Even Start projects can influence children's transitions to kindergarten in several ways. In Chapters III and IV, we describe how Even Start projects affect transitions by improving parent-child relationships and families' home literacy environments (Chapter III) and by ensuring that participating children receive a quality preschool education (Chapter IV). Chapter V discusses the need for and types of transition services--services and activities designed to foster continuity between prekindergarten and kindergarten environments--that are in place to make children's experiences more continuous. Barriers to implementing transition strategies are described in Chapter VI, and in Chapter VII, we provide our conclusions and recommendations.

II. SETTING THE FOUNDATION FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

A goal of this study was to identify which transition strategies work. That is, what strategies used by the five study projects are perceived as successful in smoothing the transitions of children and families into kindergarten? When we asked project staff to describe successful strategies, many described the basic philosophies of their program rather than strategies or activities directly related to transitions.[1] As one project staff person emphasized, "you can't address transitions for a few months before children enter kindergarten and a few months after. You need to start working on successful transitions the day the family begins participating in the project." In this chapter, we describe the program characteristics that project staff identified as key to their success with families. These characteristics provide the foundation on which smooth transitions can be built. Other program features that affect transitions, either directly or indirectly, are described in Chapters III, IV, and V.

A. USING A POSITIVE APPROACH

Many of the staff people interviewed stressed the need to emphasize families' strengths rather than weaknesses. In fact, we were told that part of the reason many families do not feel comfortable with their children's school personnel is that many schools do not approach families in this way. These families often come into the program after having had negative experiences with social services, and they feel defensive and sensitive about being judged. An Even Start family is likely to be low income[2] and to live in a house or apartment with at least one other family, and often the family members have low self-esteem. Knowing that these families will need to feel accepted and valued by the program in order to fully participate in it, program staff address everything with parents in positive terms. Staff from the Manchester project listed several features of a successful program but argued that adopting a positive approach toward families is the most important because all of the others they listed depended on families feeling valued and accepted and being able to trust the program staff.

Although this may sound simple, adopting such an approach takes effort. The Asheville project provides staff training in how to use a "non-deficit approach" with families. The Asheville curriculum coordinator stressed that it is important to *like* the families in order to work with them effectively. Consequently, the non-deficit approach training includes exercises that ask staff to visualize their friends and families in situations where they would need the program's help. In addition, they are asked to write down all of the things they believe about poor families and then to rewrite any negative statements as positive statements. Because of the success of this training, the project staff were asked to provide the training to 25 school counselors.

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[1]For the remainder of the report "project staff" will refer to the staff of the five projects we visited.

[2]Under the Reauthorized Law, effective beginning with project year 1995-96, a participating family **must** be low income and the parent must have low-level literacy skills.

B. ESTABLISHING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

Staff in the Even Start projects we visited believe that a major difference between their projects and most of the social service programs for low-income families is that families are able to form close, trusting, long-term relationships with Even Start project staff. The project staff we spoke with said that those relationships are extremely important to a project's success. Many of the Even Start parents with whom we spoke said that they consider the Even Start staff family and feel grateful for the support and caring they receive from the staff. Several said that they had felt isolated before joining the program and believed that the problems they were having with their children were unique to them. Talking to the Even Start staff person about the problems they were having made them feel more optimistic and less alone.

In four of the five projects visited, Even Start assigns a staff member to each family. That staff person visits the family in their home, often on a weekly basis, to work on an aspect of the program with them (that is, adult education, parenting, or early childhood education). Over time that staff person becomes an important presence in the family's life. These relationships typically last at least two years, unless the family leaves the program.

The project staff do not take being allowed into the home lightly. In order to preserve the family's trust, they are respectful, supportive, and non-judgmental. One staff person said that she does not look around when she's in a house or comment on any aspect of the household that is not directly related to the purpose of her visit because families are sensitive to perceived judgments. The Even Start staff also accompany their assigned families to events such as kindergarten orientations and individualized education plan (IEP) meetings.

In the fifth project, the parents establish and maintain relationships with several of the staff. This project is primarily a center-based project, although the parent coordinator makes monthly home visits and preschool teachers make periodic home visits. Parents come to the center with their children each day to attend adult education classes while their children are in preschool. Before they go to class they have breakfast or lunch--depending on the session they attend--with the Even Start staff. In addition, they attend several parenting classes and activities each week where they work with Even Start staff.

C. ASSESSING FAMILIES' NEEDS

Another common theme in the five projects' philosophies is that it is important to help families identify and meet their own needs rather than to address an assumed set of needs. This approach empowers families by teaching them to make their own decisions, set priorities, and devise a plan to meet their objectives. Project staff explained that the families who participate in Even Start tend to face a myriad of problems. They want to know how a family ranks those problems so that they can offer help that the family needs. They want to avoid giving prescribed services on a prescribed schedule because the family might not be able to use those services until they address inadequate housing, lack of food, or other immediate problems.

D. BEING FLEXIBLE

Project staff also stressed the need to keep the program flexible so that services can be provided to families in diverse circumstances. The projects in this study are successful because the staff work hard to ensure that the program helps participating families. If one mode of service delivery does not work, they try another. Participating families are not required to move at a certain pace or to meet their goals in a specified way. A participant in the Manchester project has taken the General

Educational Development (GED) Test three times without passing and yet, at the time of our site visit, she was studying to take it again. The Yonkers program found that parents of children attending one of the six Even Start schools were reluctant to attend after-school English as a second language (ESL) classes and activities for parents and children to do together because of the distance from their homes to the schools and the late hour at which they arrived home.[3] To address the parents' concerns, the program hired a part-time adult education teacher to work with the parents during school hours.

In addition, within the general framework of the program, the specific services that are provided may change depending on the participants' needs. When the Manchester staff became aware of the large number of children from participating families who were not being served by Head Start, they started a preschool for those children, taught by two of the home educators, in space adjoining the Even Start office. Staff of the Carman-Ainsworth project said the program is never the same from one year to the next because they make modifications based on participants' needs.

[3]Yonkers has a magnet school system.

III. IMPACTS OF THE EVEN START PROGRAM ON THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

Even Start projects provide a rich context in which to study the relationship between the home environment and a child's ability to cope with the move to kindergarten. As stated in Chapter I of this report, a primary goal of the Even Start program is to assist parents in becoming full partners in the education of their children. During the 1991-92 program year, Even Start projects reported that they "emphasized the role of parents in the education of their children, oriented parents and children to school routines, furnished information about child development, [and] trained parents in child behavior management" (St. Pierre et al. 1993). In addition, another goal of the Even Start program, to improve the literacy and basic adult education skills of participating parents, is likely to affect the home environment of these families. Parents who are pursuing a literacy program of their own are likely to place a high value on their children's education and to structure their home environment so as to facilitate literacy-related activities.

In this chapter, we describe the ways that the five projects we visited have influenced two aspects of the home environment: the relationships between parents and children and the literacy environment of the home. The division of projects' influences on the home environment into these two components is an artificial distinction used for the ease of discussion. In reality, the parenting and literacy activities are often combined. For example, topics covered in adult literacy classes often include parenting and child development.

A. PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

As discussed in Chapter I, children's emotional and cognitive development and, consequently, their ability to adjust easily to kindergarten, are heavily influenced by their relationships with their parents. Thus, one way to improve children's chances of a smooth transition into kindergarten is to improve those relationships. Below we discuss three ways in which the projects we visited attempt to influence the parent-child dynamics in participating families: modeling, providing parenting instruction, and providing services to parents and children together. These three approaches are most often used in conjunction with one another. For example, during a scheduled activity for both parents and children, Even Start staff are likely to model good parenting techniques and provide some form of parenting instruction.

1. Modeling

Project staff reported that one of the most important ways that they provide parenting instruction is through their own behavior. The staff's positive, supportive interactions with children and their parents allow the parents to see and experience the type of behavior that contributes to healthy, loving parent-child relationships. For example, a parent in the Asheville project said that she had always told her son he was "bad." But, after seeing how differently he was treated at the preschool *and* how well he responded, she was trying not to tell him that anymore. This type of modeling is present in all of the interactions between staff and families. In fact, as the parents receive some of the nurturing and support they need, through their relationships with the project staff, many are more able to respond to their children's needs.

More specific modeling often takes place during home visits. In all of the projects, a staff person who has been trained in this area visits the family's home, sometimes weekly, to demonstrate ways

to teach the children. For example, the Yonkers project follows the HIPPY model. Every other week, a HIPPY paraprofessional, a parent who has participated in the program and lives in the community, visits the family's home bringing HIPPY educational materials. The home visitor instructs the parent(s) in the week's lesson plan by demonstrating to the parent how she should use the materials to teach her child the week's lesson.

2. Parenting Instruction

Parenting instruction is often provided in scheduled classes and meetings. Parents participating in the Asheville project, the most center-based of the projects we visited, attend many activities related to parenting each week. Each day (five days a week, year-round), parents meet with Even Start staff for one hour of "parent time." During that time, they discuss problems they're having with their children and offer support and advice to one another. Two days per week the hour of parent time is devoted to "active parenting" classes. As stated in the project's most recent grant proposal, active parenting is "a multi-sensory approach to helping parents build a strong parent-child relationship, and to encouraging qualities of self-esteem, courage, responsibility, and cooperation." Parents also attend 15 weeks of "Motheread" parenting skills classes for two hours per week and 12 weeks of "Abiyoyo" literacy classes for two hours per week.* In addition, parent educators trained by the national PAT program conduct monthly evening meetings and monthly home visits. The project also has a small library of parenting books that can be checked out.

Parenting instruction is offered on a more informal basis during home visits. During the visits, home visitors discuss child development, provide materials on parenting and, perhaps most important, listen to the parents' concerns and frustrations and offer advice and empathy based on their own experiences.

Staff at all of the projects said that one of the most important things they teach parents is how children develop. Several said that the parents they work with have unrealistic expectations of their children's abilities and consequently become frustrated with their children's progress. One person told of a parent who told his children to sit still and watch the television. When they did not sit still, he became angry at them. The Even Start staff explained to him that, given their age, his children were not *able* to sit still for long periods of time. The Carman-Ainsworth project, which provides two years of home-based adult education instruction using curricula developed by the Even Start staff, devotes an entire course of the program to child development.

3. Parents and Children Together (PACT) Time

Even Start projects are required to provide some services to parents and children together. According to St. Pierre et al. (1993), "this is an important part of the Even Start model in that it impresses on parents that they are a key to the child's education, and provides opportunities for parents to learn and practice skills in working and playing with their children. It allows project staff a chance

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*The Motheread Program develops parenting skills and encourages supportive peer interaction through weekly meetings led by the project's family counselor. The meetings focus on children's literature, and guided discussions examine parenting issues raised by the stories. Abiyoyo is an empowerment series that, by focusing on stories derived from African or African-American folklore or written by African-American authors, seeks to build the parents' self-esteem and improve their literacy skills.

to offer concrete suggestions to parents as well as guidance and support. Finally, children are able to see that their own parents are important teachers."

All five projects devote significant time to working with parents and children together. Often, PACT time involves group activities, such as a trip to the library to get library cards, a joint arts and crafts project, or storytelling.

PACT time often takes place during the home visits as well. An evaluation report for the Kalamazoo project describes the function of home visits as follows: "Visitors demonstrate how to play with children, how to use toys and simple materials in educational and emotionally satisfying ways, how to read to children, and how to recognize and be pleased with signs of growth. They model encouraging and respectful ways of talking to children" (Cain 1995).

Parents in the Asheville project spend at least one hour per week in their children's preschool classroom, which is located in the same building as their adult education and parenting classes. When these children enter kindergarten, the Asheville parent coordinator goes with the parent to the school to volunteer in the child's kindergarten classroom for the PACT time. To increase parent-child interactions at home, the Asheville project staff created "home packets," which can be checked out from the center. Each packet contains one or two children's books, suggestions for fun activities related to the stories in the books, and all of the materials needed to complete the activities. The activities are designed to support the children's development and are geared toward different age ranges.

Project staff said that the time parents spend with their children is very valuable. For example, they explained that some of the parents were not given the chance as children to play the way their own children play, and consequently they sometimes want to direct their child's play instead of facilitating it. The PACT time allows staff to observe the parent-child interactions and, if necessary, to make suggestions or model other ways of interacting.

B. LITERACY ENVIRONMENT OF THE HOME

In addition to the quality of their relationships with their parents, children's preparedness for kindergarten is influenced by the literacy environment of their homes. Having reading materials in the home, reading to children, and believing in the value of education are ways that parents can help to prepare children for the transition to school.

1. Getting Literacy Materials into the Home

All of the projects we visited make a concerted effort to increase the amount of literacy material in participants' homes. During home visits, staff often leave books, play materials, and so on. During their bi-weekly home visits, Yonkers staff provide families with children's books written for the program and materials such as colorful plastic shapes with which children can learn concepts. One of the Manchester project home visitors says she tries to leave books for the children each time she visits because she believes that one of the best things a project can do to prepare a family for the child's transition to kindergarten is to get the family reading.

Projects also make literacy materials available to families to borrow. As described above, the Asheville project prepares home packets that can be checked out. All of the projects have books, games, and other materials available to families to borrow and take home.

All of the parents we spoke with reported being more involved in their children's education at home. One mother said that she did not value education before participating in the project and

therefore had not cared whether her children passed or failed in school. Now, she makes sure her older children do their homework every night, and she reads to her youngest child every night.

2. Adult Literacy Instruction

Another requirement of the Even Start program is that the participating adults pursue their own education by studying for the GED, taking ESL classes, or improving their employment-related skills. Consequently, Even Start parents are bringing home literacy materials for themselves, thinking more about the value of education, and feeling more empowered to change their lives. For the children, seeing these changes helps increase their interest in learning. One mother said that she hides the workbooks from her adult education class because if she does not, her daughter will try to work through the exercises first.

Not only do these parents tend to feel more interested in being involved in their children's educations, they also feel more *able* to help. Several parents said that they had been scared to help their children with their homework in the past because they were not sure that they *could* help. Improving their own education increased their confidence in their ability to participate in their children's.

IV. PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM EXPERIENCE OF EVEN START CHILDREN

This chapter describes the prekindergarten programs attended by children in the five projects we visited. As discussed in Chapter I, research has shown that children who participate in a prekindergarten program, especially a developmentally appropriate program, are likely to adjust to kindergarten more quickly than those who have not.

A. TYPES OF PROGRAMS

According to statute, Even Start children must participate in an early childhood education program, which for children under age five generally is a prekindergarten program. Because Even Start project staff are required to collaborate with other agencies to help prevent duplication of services, they attempt to enroll all of their children in programs that are already in place. If they are not able to do so, project staff provide home- or center-based education programs for the children. At the five projects we visited, the majority of children are served through center-based programs that are funded through sources other than Even Start.

In all of the projects, some proportion of the Even Start children attend a state- or city-funded prekindergarten program. Most of the children participating in the two projects in Michigan--Kalamazoo and Carman-Ainsworth--participate in Head Start or in the state prekindergarten program for at-risk four-year-olds. All of the children in the Asheville City project attend the Asheville City Schools Preschool, which is the Even Start subgrantee. The Yonkers school system offers prekindergarten programs in 13 of the public schools and at the Center for Continuing Education (CCE). Even Start children attend the programs at one of the five schools participating in the project or at CCE. In addition, special-needs children in many of the projects participate in public preschools established for special-needs children.

At three of the projects, some children attend Head Start. In Manchester, the local Head Start program holds 10 slots for Even Start children who meet the eligibility requirements. In Kalamazoo and Carman-Ainsworth, a significant proportion of participating children attend Head Start. In fact, the Carman-Ainsworth project office is in the same location as both the Head Start program and the state prekindergarten program. These two programs are identical in structure and curriculum.

At the time of our site visits, only one of the five projects operated its own preschool. The Manchester project found that a good proportion of the children were not attending a prekindergarten program when they enrolled in Even Start because either they were not eligible for Head Start or the allocation of Head Start slots was insufficient. The preschool, staffed by two of the Even Start home educators, is held in a room adjacent to the Even Start office.

Only a small percentage of the children in projects we visited participate in a program other than those listed above. They do so most frequently in the Kalamazoo project, where approximately 10 percent attend "other approved child care" (Cain 1995). Approved child care programs are licensed by the Michigan Department of Social Services. Families can receive information about approved child care services in their neighborhoods from Child Care Resources, an agency that collaborates with the Kalamazoo project.

B. PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The prekindergarten programs associated with the five projects we visited are developmentally appropriate, have child/staff ratios that are beneficial for children, and encourage parents to be involved in their children's classes.

Although not all programs use the same curricula, all curricula are developmentally appropriate. The preschool attended by children in the Asheville project uses the Circle of Childhood curriculum, which is required in kindergartens throughout the state. The prekindergarten programs for children in the Carman-Ainsworth project are based on the High/Scope curriculum, as are the state prekindergarten and the Head Start programs in Kalamazoo, and the Even Start preschool program in Manchester. The Manchester Head Start program created its own developmentally appropriate curriculum, but is planning to start using the Creative Curriculum, which is also developmentally appropriate. In Yonkers, the prekindergarten curriculum is based on the New York State prekindergarten program standards and emphasizes learning centers and child-initiated activities. Because Yonkers has magnet schools, the theme of the prekindergarten curriculum, such as science or art, varies by school, but the basic curriculum does not.

Child/staff (or child/adult) ratios in all of the prekindergarten classrooms fall within guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC 1990) for programs for 4- and 5-year-olds. The guidelines specify that no more than 20 children should be in a classroom with two adults "to enable individualized and age-appropriate programming."

All the prekindergarten programs are receptive to parents and encourage them to visit and volunteer in the classroom. Thus facilitating parental involvement in classes, the projects are working to meet the Even Start goal of helping parents become full partners in their children's education. For example, the Asheville project requires parents to spend at least one hour per week in their children's classrooms for PACT time. Similarly, at the Carman-Ainsworth project, volunteering in the Head Start or state prekindergarten classroom meets credit requirements for the four home-based adult education courses designed by Even Start staff.

V. PROVIDING CONTINUITY

This chapter addresses the continuity of experience for children participating in the five study projects as they move from prekindergarten to kindergarten. We describe the kindergarten programs these children attend and compare them to the prekindergarten programs described in Chapter IV. We also describe the services that the projects and schools provide to smooth the transition.

A. CONTINUITY IN PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Most kindergarten programs differ somewhat from the prekindergarten programs children attended, thus creating discontinuity in their experience. However, the degree of discontinuity varies by project according to how different the two programs, or environments, really are. In this section, we compare the curriculum, child/staff ratio, and level of parental involvement in the kindergarten programs children attend with those of their prekindergarten programs.

- ***Curriculum.*** The degree of continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten curricula varies by project. Schools in the Asheville district are required by the state to use the Circle of Childhood curriculum, also used in the Asheville city preschool. Principals in the Asheville schools said that the city preschool children, including the Even Start children, come to kindergarten prepared because they are familiar with the learning centers, while it takes other children longer to acclimate to the classroom. Yonkers and Carman-Ainsworth schools use developmentally appropriate kindergarten curricula that are required throughout the district or the state and are designed to follow on the prekindergarten curricula. Carman-Ainsworth staff expressed concern, however, that not all kindergarten teachers follow the required curriculum. Kalamazoo kindergartens use curricula such as the Letter People and Chicago Math, and devote less time to child-initiated activities and learning centers than do the prekindergarten programs Even Start children attend. And in Manchester, project staff could not describe the degree of continuity in the curricula because the school system does not yet have a standardized curriculum for kindergarten. The curriculum used in a particular classroom depends on the school and the kindergarten teacher.[1]

- ***Child/Staff Ratio.*** The child/staff ratio is typically much higher in kindergarten classrooms than in preschool classrooms. In three of the five projects, the child/staff ratio in kindergarten classrooms is between 20 and 25 children per teacher. As stated in the previous chapter, NAEYC guidelines recommend that for 4- and 5-year-old children, there are 2 adults for every 20 children (NAEYC 1990). Ratios in the Yonkers and Asheville kindergarten classrooms are smaller because classes are staffed with a teacher and a teacher's aide. The child/staff ratio in these classrooms is about 21 to 2.

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[1]In fact, kindergarten participation is not mandatory in the state of New Hampshire.

- ***Level of Parent Involvement.*** Although some of the school systems emphasize the need for parent involvement in the schools, the degree to which parents are welcome in their children's kindergarten classroom varies with the attitude of the classroom teacher. While some encourage parents to participate, others do so to a much lesser degree. Because of this variation, project staff were unable to provide us with definitive information regarding the level of parental involvement in kindergarten classrooms. However, it is likely that the overall level of parents' involvement in kindergarten is lower than that in prekindergarten.

B. TRANSITION SERVICES: EFFORTS TO EASE THE TRANSITION

Projects and schools provide a variety of services for parents and children to help smooth the transition from preschool to kindergarten, as described in this section. Because the information presented here was not obtained in the same manner or at the same time as were the ESIS data, it may not match the information in the ESIS about transition services that was included in Chapter II. For example, while the ESIS data indicated that prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers participate in joint training or planning activities at two of the five projects studied, we found through site visits that these activities occur at three of the projects. In addition, because Even Start staff design their transition strategies in light of services provided by schools or other agencies, we describe all of the services we learned about rather than only those initiated by Even Start staff.

1. Kindergarten Orientation/Visits to Kindergarten Classrooms

All of the schools that the Even Start children from these five projects enter hold a kindergarten orientation (called kindergarten round-up in a few schools). The orientation is most often held before the end of the prekindergarten school year, although the Yonkers schools hold theirs in September. During orientation, parents have an opportunity to meet school staff and register their children for kindergarten. In addition, some of the schools run clinics during orientation so parents can have their children immunized, and some have buses available so that parents and children can go for a bus ride to see what it will be like for the children when school starts. The amount of time parents and children are able to visit the kindergarten classroom and speak with a kindergarten teacher varies by school.

Even Start staff typically accompany families to orientation to provide support and assistance. Many of the Even Start parents did not have a good school experience. Consequently, they often feel apprehensive at the thought of going to orientation. In addition, they may have trouble completing the registration and other forms. Having an Even Start staff person with them makes the experience less threatening. A principal in Kalamazoo said that, previously, many families did not attend orientation to register their children and instead came to school during the first week of classes and needed to register. He said it was very helpful to him and other school staff that Even Start families now attend orientation. Comparable families that do not participate in Even Start are less likely to attend.

Even Start families in Carman-Ainsworth also did not attend orientation, and the project staff received calls from schools about the number of unregistered families arriving the first week of school. The staff found that families were not attending orientation because they felt intimidated. In response, Head Start and state prekindergarten family liaisons began taking parents and children to the school in April or May for what is essentially their own orientation. While the parents are welcomed by the principal and other staff, the project staff take the children into the kindergarten room. Each visiting preschool child is paired with a kindergarten "buddy" who can show him around. Parents can ask

questions they have about the kindergarten program and register their children for kindergarten during the visit.

The Asheville schools have both a school orientation week in March and a kindergarten orientation day in May. Because the schools are magnet schools, parents visit each school in March to see which one would be best for their child. Parents of incoming kindergarten students can also observe kindergarten classrooms in session at this time. In May, current kindergarten children are kept at home for a day so that parents and preschool children can spend more time in the classroom and speak with the teacher. The Asheville preschool teachers accompany the families on one or both of these occasions.

2. Preparation for Parents

Staff at several of the projects said that one of the ways they help the family with the transition to kindergarten is to empower the parents to act as advocates for their children. Parents receive instruction on how to work with school staff, ways to volunteer at their child's school, and what kind of kindergarten experience they should expect for their child.

Project staff try to prepare parents for the transition in many small ways over a period of time. For example, in Manchester's adult literacy class, a project might be writing a letter to the school about a child's absence. Similarly, class sessions in the Asheville Even Start adult literacy lab address topics such as how to choose a magnet school for your child. Parents spend another class session in their children's classroom where the teachers familiarize them with the developmentally appropriate curriculum that is used so they will know what to look for to make sure their child is receiving appropriate care and so that they can support their child's learning at home. The Asheville preschool teachers begin discussing kindergarten with parents in November or December of the year before their child is to attend kindergarten.

In addition, written materials may be prepared to provide parents with information relevant to the transition. Manchester Even Start staff prepared a memo for parents that provides important school numbers, suggestions about how to become acquainted with the kindergarten teacher, written examples of notes to the school regarding a child's absence, and advice about how to help the child succeed in school by taking an interest in the child's education, making sure the child goes to school every day possible, and seeing that he or she gets adequate sleep and a good breakfast before school. During the summer, the Carman-Ainsworth school system sends a "newspaper" called the *Kindergarten Courier* to all incoming kindergarten families in the district that contains similar types of information. It describes the philosophy of the Carman-Ainsworth Early Childhood Program and the early childhood curriculum, gives tips to help reduce children's anxiety about starting school and ways to encourage learning and boost self-confidence, and explains the type of development that takes place in children five to seven years old. The project also sends parents a packet before school begins containing information on the child's teacher, school schedules, and bus transportation. At kindergarten orientation, Kalamazoo parents are given a welcome letter from the kindergarten teacher and calendars of the summer months on which suggested activities for parents and children are written for each day.

3. Transfer of Records

According to Kagan (1990), prekindergarten programs should provide kindergarten teachers with information on "what has been covered" and the "learning styles, accomplishments, interests, and needs of individual children." At two of the five projects, prekindergarten teachers do provide this type of information to kindergarten teachers. The Asheville project gives kindergarten teachers a

portfolio for each of the Even Start children that contains a picture of the child, examples of the child's work, and copies of the preschool teacher's anecdotal notes and six-month syntheses of those notes. All comments about the child are expressed in positive terms. One of the six Yonkers schools participating in the program gives similar portfolios to kindergarten teachers. (The Yonkers project director did not think that the other five schools do this, although she believes that the school system is moving in this direction.)

Formal school records (such as health records) are transferred to receiving kindergartens by the Kalamazoo and Carman-Ainsworth projects, but less formal information about the children, such as examples of their work and anecdotal notes about them, are not. The Manchester project director said that at this time they do not transfer records or other information about the students in the project's preschool to receiving schools.

4. Educating School Personnel About Entering Children

Information about entering kindergartners also is provided to their teachers in less formal ways than the transfer of written records. For example, at the end of the preschool year or the beginning of the kindergarten year, the Asheville project organizes a transition meeting for every Even Start child entering kindergarten. The meeting is held at the school the child will be entering and is attended by the preschool teacher, the parent, the kindergarten teacher, the school counselor, the Even Start family coordinator, the school principal, and the preschool curriculum/transition coordinator. Preschool and Even Start staff describe the child's experience in preschool, the child's identified needs and strengths, and approaches to working with the child that were successful. During the meeting, preschool staff give the kindergarten teacher a portfolio about the child, as described in the previous section.

In addition, during the first six months of the school year, the curriculum/transition coordinator for the Asheville preschool makes weekly visits to each of the elementary schools that have Even Start children in the kindergarten classrooms to act as a resource for the teachers, visit the classrooms, make sure the children are adjusting well, and provide consistency for Even Start families.

In October of the kindergarten year, Carman-Ainsworth Head Start and state prekindergarten teachers visit the schools Even Start children attend. They go in pairs, and while one substitutes in a kindergarten classroom, the other meets with the teacher to learn about the progress of the project's former preschool children and the teacher's expectations for them, as well as to provide information about the children's experiences in preschool, special needs the children have, and teaching methods that work well with the children. Visiting the schools allows the preschool teachers to observe the kindergarten classroom and to visit their former students in their new surroundings. Kindergarten teachers are very receptive to help at that time because they have worked with the children for several weeks and will be holding their first parent-teacher conferences in November.

Manchester Even Start staff write letters to the receiving kindergarten teachers introducing themselves and how they know the family, and offering assistance. The staff try to educate school personnel about the importance of considering children in the context of their families.

5. Post-Transition Follow-Up

Because children are eligible for Even Start until age eight, all of the projects continue to have contact with the children who enter kindergarten through home visits, family activities, and center-

based activities.[2] Project staff initiate and maintain contact with school personnel who work with families (for example, social workers and community liaisons), and if a child is reported to be having trouble in kindergarten, they work with the parents and school personnel to address the problem, and may visit the child in the classroom. Even if a child is not reported to be having a problem in kindergarten, project staff may meet with the kindergarten teacher to learn what the class is working on so that the project staff can cover the same material when they work with the child. In addition, Even Start staff may attend parent teacher conferences with parents, IEP meetings, and/or other school functions and activities, such as Back-to-School Night.

6. Joint Planning and/or Training

Staff from three of the five projects described joint planning or training activities. As will be described in the next chapter, two Asheville kindergarten teachers provide joint in-service training about curriculum and related topics to prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers about seven times per year. In the spring of each year, kindergarten teachers in the Carman-Ainsworth school system visit the Head Start and state prekindergarten classrooms to observe the class and meet their incoming students. During their visit, the kindergarten and prekindergarten teachers participate in a joint staff development activity such as attending a workshop or participating in organized discussions about transitions. In addition, Head Start and state prekindergarten staff are involved in all district wide committees and in-service training, and the district wide early childhood committee includes representatives from the Head Start and state prekindergarten programs, along with kindergarten, first and second grade teachers from each elementary school. Joint early childhood staff meetings are held monthly in Kalamazoo. These meetings are attended regularly by state prekindergarten, kindergarten, special education, and Even Start staff. Bilingual, Title I, and Head Start staff are often invited to the meetings. Staff development is provided during some of the meetings.

7. Summer Activities

During this study year, projects were encouraged to provide for continuity of services to maintain the progress of families by, for example, holding summer activities for families so that they retain contact with the projects during the summer months. All of the projects we visited do so.[3] In addition, elementary schools may organize summer activities for incoming families. Staff at two of the projects described summer activities available to their participating families that are directly related to the transition to kindergarten.

For the first time during the year of this study, the Carman-Ainsworth project staff facilitated home visits during the summer to every Head Start and state prekindergarten family with a child entering kindergarten in the fall. A Head Start Community Liaison and a representative from the school the child would be entering, usually the school's community liaison, visited families in July to introduce the school representative and to speak with the child about kindergarten. In a separate effort,

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[2]A family is eligible for Even Start until all of the family members become ineligible, either because of age in the case of the child, or educational advancements in the case of the adult.

[3]The Reauthorized Law, effective beginning with project year 1995-96, requires projects to operate on a year-round basis, "including the provision of some program services, instructional or enrichment, during the summer months." (Section 1205 (7), ESEA).

principals from two of the Carman-Ainsworth schools visit the families of all incoming kindergarten students with the community liaison and/or the child's kindergarten teacher. One of the principals told us that the first year she did the home visits, the kindergarten teachers told her that they could see a big improvement in children's and parents' attitudes at the beginning of the year.

The Kalamazoo early childhood staff have started an "Early Start" summer program for children who had not participated in any form of preschool because they were on the Head Start or state prekindergarten waiting list or they were new to the area, children who attended less than a semester of Head Start or state prekindergarten and are recommended for the program by teachers, and age-eligible children who are recommended by the bilingual or migrant staff. The program lasts six weeks and is taught by a prekindergarten and a kindergarten teacher. Recruiting for the program is done by parents of children in the state prekindergarten program. These parents also conduct home visits to the Early Start families during the six-week period.

VI. BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES THAT IMPROVE TRANSITIONS

Project staff can encounter barriers in attempting to enhance children's home environment, enroll them in high-quality prekindergarten programs, and create continuity in their experience as they make the transition to kindergarten. This chapter describes the barriers faced by staff at the five projects we visited, as well as the methods they have used to overcome them.

A. THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

Certain aspects of a family's home and lifestyle can make changing the home environment challenging. For example, staff from some of the projects discussed the potential dangers associated with making home visits because participating families sometimes live in unsafe areas. This issue became more pressing for the Yonkers project when two home visitors were mugged. The project instructs home visitors to arrange to meet participants at restaurants or at a school if they feel that the neighborhood is not safe.[1] Another challenge is drug abuse, of which home visitors may also find evidence.

Changing the behavior of parents can be a lengthy process. One staff person reported that just getting a parent to "look you in the eye" can be a milestone. In addition, these families often face a multitude of problems that distract them from focusing on information about their children.

Poor attendance at parent meetings was a concern of those involved in the Kalamazoo project. Child care is provided during the meetings, but parents do not always feel comfortable leaving their children with strangers. Parents may also be apprehensive about meeting a number of other parents they do not know. Aware of these feelings, the designers of the project made it primarily a home-based project. Project staff are finding that parents who have participated in the program for some time are more likely than newer participants to attend the meetings.

B. PREKINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE

The projects cited few barriers to providing participating children with a high-quality prekindergarten experience. This is probably because many of the Even Start staff are strongly connected with the prekindergarten programs children attend and, therefore, tend to have some control over the programs. For example, the Asheville project is operated by the Asheville City Schools preschool, and the project staff are paid partly by the preschool and partly by Even Start.[2] Similarly,

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[1]The Even Start Law requires each project to provide and monitor integrated instructional services to each participating family through home-based programs. Therefore, although an alternative site may be acceptable on a temporary basis, projects must ultimately find a method for providing some instructional services in each family's home, such as by visiting the home in pairs.

[2]Although all of the Even Start children attend the Asheville city preschool, the Even Start staff are concerned that other preschool programs in Asheville do not use developmentally appropriate curricula. Consequently, they visit other preschools periodically and, by assisting in the classroom, model a developmentally appropriate approach.

the Carman-Ainsworth Even Start project is one component of The Learning Community, a family services program that is really a combination of a number of programs, such as Head Start, the state prekindergarten program, Even Start, and adult education. Learning Community staff work on and are paid from several of the programs. For example, Even Start pays the projects' family support visitors for noninstructional time, and adult education pays them for instructional time. The Yonkers project is operated out of the Yonkers public school system, which encompasses the elementary schools' prekindergarten programs, and the director of the Kalamazoo project also directs the state prekindergarten program.

A barrier confronted by the Manchester project is an absence of prekindergarten programs for which the Even Start children are eligible. The project is operated through the Manchester school system, which has a prekindergarten program in only one of the elementary schools. Head Start runs the only other prekindergarten program available to Even Start families and only 10 Head Start slots are reserved for Even Start children. At intake, the Even Start staff became aware of a number of children who were not enrolled in either program because they did not live in the attendance area of the one elementary school with a prekindergarten program, they did not meet the Head Start eligibility requirements, or Head Start did not have space for them. The Even Start staff therefore set up their own small preschool for the children who could not be served by other programs.

C. PROVIDING CONTINUITY

As in the previous chapter, we discuss continuity in terms of (1) the differences between prekindergarten and kindergarten programs and (2) transition services.

1. Continuity in Programs

Aspects of the kindergarten environment, such as a high child/staff ratio, can make the transition experience discontinuous. However, while Even Start staff may want to change the kindergarten environment to make the experience more continuous, they typically have little or no control over that environment. Below we describe staff efforts to influence kindergarten curricula and level of parent involvement in the kindergarten programs attended by Even Start children. We are not aware of efforts to lower classroom child/staff ratios.

a. Kindergarten Curricula

Although the Carman-Ainsworth school district requires a developmentally appropriate curriculum, some teachers are resistant to this curriculum because they are accustomed to a more academic approach. The difference between this approach and the developmentally appropriate curricula typical of prekindergarten programs creates discontinuity for children who move from one program to the next. To encourage the use of the required curriculum, project staff advocate the importance of a developmentally appropriate approach by participating in workshops and committees, and by visiting classrooms.

In 1990, when the Asheville City Schools (and all other North Carolina school districts) were required by the state to use a developmentally appropriate curriculum in the kindergarten classrooms, the Asheville project staff did not need to play an advocacy role because the school district took action to support the new curriculum. The district asked two kindergarten teachers, called "helping teachers," to help other kindergarten teachers throughout the district adapt to the new curriculum. The helping

teachers visited kindergarten classrooms to model the new teaching methods, and they continue to provide in-service training about the curriculum and related topics for both prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers about seven times per year.

b. Level of Parental Involvement

The level of parental involvement in kindergarten depends on teachers' attitudes (see Chapter VI). Unlike all of the prekindergarten teachers, some kindergarten teachers do not welcome parents into their classroom. In the Yonkers project, a school-based project for which many services are provided by or in the schools, some teachers resisted developing class activities that involve parents. As stated in Yonkers project's plan for 1994-95, "Many looked upon these 'total family' activities as burdensome and a hindrance to their work directly with children." To break down this resistance, the project organized several training sessions for teachers with representatives from the National Center for Family Literacy, the Even Start project staff, and the school system's Center for Continuing Education. The sessions covered parent-school communication, family literacy, and joint parent-child activities. Project staff said that over time, with the help of the training, the teachers became more interested in and aware of the value of parental participation in the classroom.

Parents too may be reluctant to participate in the classroom. Staff from all of the projects said that Even Start parents have typically had bad experiences with the school system and are therefore disinclined to become involved in their children's schools. In addition, many of their own experiences in school were not positive, and many did not complete high school. And, those who have older children who entered the school system before joining Even Start may have had negative interactions with schools concerning those children. Staff from several projects said that parents are accustomed to hearing from schools only when there is a problem.

To increase the level of parental participation in kindergarten classrooms, projects try to make their participation more appealing to both parents and teachers. The Asheville project's parent coordinator routinely goes with parents to volunteer in the kindergarten classroom. One of the school principals said that this has been very effective in making parents feel more comfortable in the classroom. Staff from other projects accompany parents into the classroom when parents express a need for support. The preschool teachers associated with the Carman-Ainsworth project, along with the kindergarten teachers, jointly provide training to parents to prepare them to volunteer in school. Although these services are directed more at parents, it is likely that they also make teachers more comfortable about having parents in their classrooms, since the parents will be better prepared to assist them.

In addition, because of their participation in the project, the Even Start parents are often more aware of the importance of their involvement in their children's education and are better prepared to act as advocates for their children. Staff from several of the projects as well as school staff said that Even Start parents are more likely than their counterparts to volunteer in their children's classrooms.

2. Implementing Transition Services

Staff from the Carman-Ainsworth project encountered resistance from schools when they asked to bring the Even Start children (as well as other children in the Head Start and state prekindergarten programs) to visit the kindergarten classrooms. The project's education coordinator said that she had to convince the school principals that the visits were necessary. During these discussions, she received comments such as "why do you hold their hands?" When the project staff did get permission for the visits, they did what they could to reduce the burden of the visit on the school staff. For example, they knew the kindergarten teachers might find it inconvenient to have to supply snacks for their children and those visiting, so the project staff told the teachers in advance that they would bring snacks for all of the children. In addition, they worked with the kindergarten teachers in directing the classroom during the visits. Because the visits were successful, the schools became enthusiastic about them.

Staff at all of the projects reported that participating families move often, which can make transition services less effective. When a family cannot pay rent, they move to another house or apartment, or they move in with relatives or other families with whom they can share the rent. The original grant proposal for the Manchester project states that 30 to 40 percent of the student population moves at least once during the school year. This can be difficult for children, who must change schools as a result of the move, and for the project staff, who are helping the children adjust to school. Manchester staff said they strongly encourage families to move within the same school district. Yonkers staff noted that an added benefit of their magnet school system is that the school of attendance is not determined by the family's place of residence, so children do not need to change schools each time their family moves.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter answers the four research questions listed in Chapter I on the basis of information from site visits to five Even Start projects. Also included are recommendations for designing successful transition strategies.

A. CONCLUSIONS

1. How Do Even Start Projects Support Children's Transitions to Kindergarten?

In many ways, the main components of the Even Start program are well positioned to support children's transitions to kindergarten. According to the literature, children's transitions are influenced by their home environment, the prekindergarten programs they attend, if any, and the degree of continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments. The three required components of Even Start projects--early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education--directly influence children's home environments and prekindergarten experiences by providing parenting education instruction, facilitating and supervising joint parent-child activities, enrolling parents in their own literacy and adult education activities, and enrolling children in quality prekindergarten programs. Although Even Start projects are not required to establish continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments, the children's continued participation in the program during that period (they are eligible for the program until they are eight years old) helps provide continuity for the support systems created by the project, the school, and the district.

In addition to program components that are required of Even Start projects, the projects we visited have implemented the following types of services specifically designed to support families as the children make the transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten.

- To increase Even Start families' participation in school-related transition activities such as kindergarten orientation, Even Start staff inform families of, and often accompany them to, these events.

- Project staff work closely with parents to educate them about the transition and to empower them to act as their children's advocates. For example, parents receive instruction on how to work with school staff, ways to volunteer in their child's classroom and what kind of kindergarten experience they should expect for their child.

- If families need extra support, project staff sometimes organize activities in conjunction with schools, such as visits to the kindergarten classroom, especially for Even Start preschool children and their families (as well as other families whose children attend the same prekindergarten programs).

- Some of the school systems with which the projects work hold joint in-service training for prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers. In addition, prekindergarten staff may sit on district wide committees related to early childhood education.

- Staff from two of the projects assemble a portfolio for each child entering kindergarten that contains examples of the child's work, as well as the prekindergarten teachers' anecdotal notes about the child's progress in preschool.

- Staff from several projects meet with school staff to discuss entering children's needs and strengths as they pertain to the kindergarten experience.

- During the summer that precedes kindergarten, projects organize activities such as programs for children who had little or no preschool experience and visits to the homes of entering kindergartners.

- Post-transition follow-up is provided by project staff who visit the schools that receive Even Start children, introduce themselves to teachers and other school staff, and meet with the kindergarten teachers to discuss the children's experiences in kindergarten.

2. What Strategies Are Perceived by Those Involved in the Transition Process as Effective or Particularly Successful in Smoothing the Transition?

When project staff were asked to describe the strategies that are most successful in smoothing children's transitions, they did not describe the program components or transition services described under question 1. Instead, they discussed approaches they use in working with families, which help families stay in the program and take advantage of its services, including those related to the transition to kindergarten. The four approaches consistently mentioned as being successful are: (1) emphasizing families' strengths rather than their weaknesses in all interactions, (2) establishing and maintaining long-term trusting relationships with families, (3) empowering families by helping them to identify and address their needs rather than telling them what they need and providing them with prescribed services, and (4) being flexible in the provision of services so that families in different circumstances can participate in the program. Together, these approaches enable families to feel, sometimes for the first time, important, respected, supported, and hopeful. Developing these feelings in families, project staff believe, is the most important service they can provide because it makes families more receptive, and therefore more responsive to, the program.

3. What Are the Characteristics of Projects That Implement Successful Strategies?

The site selection process for this study was geared toward identifying five projects that individually had potentially successful transition strategies and, as a group, would provide the greatest diversity in terms of project characteristics. Because of the small sample, it is difficult to assess fully the types of projects that implement successful transition strategies. We can, however, make some general statements.

- Staff of several of the projects said that they have a school board that is supportive of early childhood education. Thus, program strategies were probably easier to implement than they would have been in a less supportive environment.

- Several of the projects are very closely linked with other programs, such as Head Start and city or state prekindergarten programs, so that staff are paid jointly by Even Start and the other programs. Typically, these projects were operating before they received Even Start funding, which could then be used to expand the number and types of services that could be provided. And, staff at these projects are continually writing grant proposals for funding to address needs as they are identified.

- The turnover among the project staff is low. Many staff members had worked with their project since it began receiving Even Start funds, if not before. This allows time to build trust between project staff and families.

4. What Are the Major Barriers to Implementing Successful Transition Strategies?

Certain aspects of participating families' homes and lifestyles can make it difficult to enhance the home environment or to increase participation in the project or at school. At times, project staff must enter unsafe neighborhoods in order to conduct a home visit, they may encounter parents who abuse drugs or alcohol, and they may have a difficult time convincing parents who have had negative school-related experiences to attend project or school activities. In addition, Even Start families tend to move quite frequently, making it necessary for the children to change schools.

In addition, characteristics of the school environment can create discontinuity in children's experiences. Compared with prekindergarten programs, curricula in kindergartens are, in general, less likely to be developmentally appropriate--either because the schools have not adopted a standardized curriculum that is developmentally appropriate or because the kindergarten teachers are resistant to implementing such a curriculum. Child/staff ratios tend to be higher in kindergarten, and school staff are not always amenable to visits from parents and their preschool children or to having parents participate in the kindergarten classrooms.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION STRATEGIES

This study represents an important first step in identifying and documenting successful transition strategies. In this section we present three recommendations for designing successful transition strategies, based on our analysis of the transition strategies used by five Even Start projects.

1. Provide Intensive Parenting Education

Because parenting styles are difficult to change, project staff should provide intensive parenting instruction, preferably over a long period of time. The Asheville project represents a particularly strong model of parenting education. Parents participate in at least one hour of "parent time" every day, and in two courses related to parenting (called Motheread and Abiyoyo) that meet weekly over several weeks. Both services include structured group discussions about parenting issues. Parents are also visited periodically at home by project staff and they can attend monthly parenting meetings and adult education classes in which parenting issues are discussed frequently; project staff model good parenting practices; and parents are required to spend at least one hour every week in their children's classroom. In short, the parenting education component of the Asheville project is implemented every day through many different types of activities. Lasting behavior changes are more likely to take place

through this type of program than through programs in which parenting education is offered less frequently.

Projects that are primarily home based would find it more difficult to provide parenting education through daily meetings and activities. So that the participants in the Carman-Ainsworth project receive sufficient parenting education during the home-based phase of the project, the project staff designed the home-based adult education course curricula to address many life-skills issues, including those related to parenting. One of the four courses is devoted exclusively to child development.

2. Maintain Close Contact with All of the Prekindergarten Programs Serving Even Start Children

Project staff should maintain close contact with all of the prekindergarten programs serving Even Start children to ensure that all children receive the same high-quality care. This can be more difficult for projects in which children participate in several different prekindergarten programs. Compared with the staff of projects in which children participate in one or two prekindergarten programs, the staff of these projects were less knowledgeable about and involved with each of the programs and had less contact with some children than others. An exception is the Yonkers project, in which children attend one of the six participating elementary schools that provide prekindergarten programs. All of the programs are operated by the school district and follow the same basic curriculum. To ensure that all children receive the same level of attention, project staff are assigned to each of the six schools.

3. Provid[illegible]nsition Services That Facilitate Interactions Among Parents, Project Staff, Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers

Several examples follow of particularly successful interactions among project staff, preschool teachers, parents, and kindergarten teachers that facilitate children's transitions to kindergarten.

- ***Visits to the Kindergarten Classroom***. These visits are especially useful if children can spend time exploring the classroom, and parents have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with the kindergarten teacher and other school staff.

- ***Educating School Personnel About Entering Children***. Efforts by project and preschool staff to inform school personnel of the experiences their entering kindergartners had in preschool, the children's identified strengths and weaknesses, and teaching methods that have been successful with the children are extremely helpful in providing smoother transitions.

- ***Transfer of Records***. The transfer of records is most useful when they include information about the children's developmental progress in preschool. The Asheville project staff give this type of information, along with a picture of the child and examples of her work, directly to the child's kindergarten teacher during the transition meeting.

- ***Facilitating Parent's Involvement in School***. It is likely that Even Start parents would be much less likely to participate in their children's classroom if they did not receive support from the project staff. Services that appear to be especially

helpful are a project staff person who volunteers to be in the classroom with the parent, teaching parents how to communicate with school personnel and how to act as advocates for their children, and having preschool and kindergarten teachers train parents in how to participate in the kindergarten classroom.

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APPENDIX A

SELECTING PROJECTS FOR SITE VISITS

SELECTING PROJECTS FOR SITE VISITS

This appendix describes the process through which we selected five projects to visit. Because the report focuses on successful transition strategies, we needed to visit five projects that we believed had implemented such strategies. We used two sources of information to select these projects: data from the Even Start Information System (ESIS) and recommendations from those knowledgeable about the Even Start program.

A. USING THE EVEN START INFORMATION SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR SITE VISITS

The ESIS was developed to collect data as part of the second national evaluation of the Even Start project.[1] Each year during this four-year evaluation, the ESIS collects the same set of data elements from all Even Start projects about program services and the characteristics of participating families. The purpose of the ESIS "is to provide ongoing descriptive information on the Even Start program, including the types of projects that have been funded, the services that they provide, the collaborative efforts that they have undertaken, and the obstacles that exist to program implementation" (Swartz and St. Pierre 1994).

The ESIS data will be used at the local level for planning and evaluation and at the state and national levels to assess program and participant characteristics. The basic research questions that the ESIS was designed to address are:

- Who is served by the program and what services do they receive?
- Is the program reaching the appropriate target population?
- How well were the federal funds for the program spent?
- How many of the programs were well implemented?

At the time of this study, ESIS project-related data were available for the first year only. These data pertain to the 439 projects operating during program year 1993 to 1994 (PY93-94).

1. Information in the ESIS about Transitions

Although the ESIS was not designed to address transition services implemented by Even Start projects, it can provide useful information about transitions. We focused our analysis of the ESIS data on information related to the three areas discussed in the literature review conducted as part of this study: (1) the home environment, (2) the prekindergarten programs, and (3) continuity between the prekindergarten and kindergarten environments. The ESIS data most helpful in looking at each of these are described in the following sections.

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[1]The ESIS is based on the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS), the data collection system designed for the first national evaluation of the Even Start program.

a. Home Environment

The ESIS data do not contain information on families' home environments. However, because all Even Start projects are required to provide parenting education, the ESIS data do contain some information about that project component. The most enlightening information about a project's approach to parenting education identifies the models and curricula that were most influential in the project design. For example, the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model seeks to improve family literacy and parenting by offering a structured, center-based program for children ages three to four and their parents. In this model, parents and children ride the bus together and share a meal at the school or center. While the children attend a developmentally appropriate preschool program (based on the High-Scope curriculum), the parents take adult education and literacy classes. The parents also attend parenting classes during the day and parents and their children work together on structured activities during the 45 minutes of PACT (parent and child together) time. Other program models, such as Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), strive to prepare parents for their roles as their children's first teachers, primarily through home visits and periodic group meetings. During the home visits, the PAT or HIPPY home visitor models for the parent how to foster developmental growth in children through games, books, and exercises.

b. Prekindergarten Programs

As discussed in Chapter I, children will adjust more easily to kindergarten if they participated in a prekindergarten program and, given that they did, if the program used a developmentally appropriate, rather than an academic, approach. According to the program requirements, all Even Start children will participate in an early childhood, or prekindergarten, program.[2] Thus, Even Start ensures that participating children will start kindergarten with the benefits of prekindergarten program experience.

We can use the ESIS data to learn something about the nature of the programs in which children participate. In particular, two components of the ESIS are helpful in identifying projects with early childhood programs that use developmentally appropriate practices.[3]

- ***Early Childhood Curriculum***. The ESIS project-level questionnaire contains questions about the degree to which the early childhood curriculum is individualized versus standardized, centered around group activities rather than solitary ones, and centered around learner-selected rather than instructor-selected activities. Projects with developmentally appropriate practices should rank their curricula as more individualized than standardized and emphasize learner-selected rather than

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[2]The legislation does not require that the program be center based although most are.

[3]Information about developmentally appropriate practices can also be found in project staffs' responses to an open-ended ESIS question about services provided to assist children during the transition. However, upon examining responses to this question, we did not feel that this was a reliable source of information because project staff who indicated using a developmentally appropriate curriculum, such as High/Scope, in response to the question about program models and curricula that were influential in the project's design did not always mention developmentally appropriate practices in their response to the open-ended question.

instructor-selected activities. They would probably provide a mixture of group activities and activities children do alone.

- ***Program Model/Curricula***. Project staff were also asked to identify the program models and curricula that were most influential in the project's design. Because curricula such as the High/Scope curriculum were designed to be developmentally appropriate, we can speculate that projects indicating that the High/Scope curriculum was influential in their project design have implemented developmentally appropriate practices.

c. Continuity Between Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Programs

The ESIS data do not contain any information on the characteristics of the kindergarten programs Even Start children enter. However, the ESIS project-level data collection form does ask project staff to describe services they provide "to help children progress from preschool to kindergarten and from kindergarten to primary grades" (referred to here as transition services). Because it was an open-ended question, project staff could write as much or as little as they wanted in response to this question. No examples of possible types of services were provided.

2. Identifying Potential Projects to Visit

Because the information on transition services is the only information specifically addressing transitions, we began the site selection process by categorizing projects' responses to that question. By carefully reading the responses of all the projects in the database regarding transition services provided, we were able to group and code similar responses into 16 categories. Table A.1 shows the percentage of the 431 projects that listed services in each category.[4] The services and activities most frequently mentioned are using developmentally appropriate practices, facilitating parents' participation in school, taking children to visit their kindergarten classroom, having Even Start staff act as intermediaries for children and families, and providing required support services to families, such as transportation and child care. The service mentioned least frequently is providing joint inservice training for prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers.

These 16 categories were created so that all of the information provided could be coded. Because the goal was to select five projects that we believed had potentially successful transition strategies, we decided to focus on a subset of those categories that represent transition services that are not required of Even Start projects, are believed to be effective, for which we have complete information, and over which the projects may have some control. To narrow down the list of services under consideration, we first eliminated services that are required of all Even Start projects: helping parents be their children's first teacher and other services such as transportation. Because these services should be part of all the projects, that information was not especially valuable. Next, we did not consider services that, according to the research literature and/or the beliefs of many early childhood practitioners, may not be successful in easing children's transitions to kindergarten, such as readiness workshops, tests or screenings, and after-school supplemental programs. Third, because many projects did not specifically mention using developmentally appropriate practices in response to the ESIS open-ended

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[4]There are 439 projects in the first year project-level ESIS data, but no information on transition services was provided for eight projects.

question but did indicate that their project design was influenced by a curriculum such as High/Scope, we were not confident that the variable created for developmentally appropriate practices was accurate, and we did not consider it. In addition, the categories referring to summer programs and "other services" were not considered because they are too vague. Many Even Start projects operate summer programs and they can vary substantially in content and in their relevance to the transition to kindergarten. Fourth, because an Even Start project might not have much control over whether the preschool is collocated with the kindergarten, we did not consider that variable.

The seven service categories that remain, listed in Table A.2, were considered in the site selection process. To identify projects with potentially successful strategies, we selected those that reported providing services in four or more of those seven categories. The ESIS data indicate that nine of the 439 Even Start projects that received funding in PY93-94 had implemented at least four of these services. (Among all projects, the average number was about two.) Table A.3 lists the nine projects and indicates which services each provides. The services most often provided by these projects are facilitating parents' involvement in school, scheduling preschoolers for visits to kindergarten classrooms, encouraging communication among Even Start staff and prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers, and having Even Start staff members act as intermediaries for children and families. The services least often provided are the transfer of student records, joint inservice training, and meetings between parents and kindergarten teachers.[5]

3. Characteristics of Potential Projects

As discussed above, in addition to the open-ended question about transition services, project staff were asked to rate their curricula on a five-point scale with regard to the following three continua: individualized versus standardized instruction, group versus solitary activities, and learner-selected rather than instructor-selected activities. Table A.4 provides that information for the nine potential site visit projects. These projects tend to use curricula that stress individualized instruction and emphasize both group and individual activities and both learner- and instructor-selected activities. Only the St. Joseph County project and the Links to Literacy project emphasize instructor-selected activities more than learner-selected activities. Among all of the 439 projects in the ESIS database, about 60 percent indicated using a curriculum that emphasizes individualized (rather than standardized) instruction (compared with 89 percent of the projects in table A.4), and 38 percent emphasize group activities over children working alone (compared with 56 percent of the projects in table A.4). Only 21 percent of all projects emphasize learner-selected activities more than those selected by an instructor, compared to 33 percent of the projects in table A.4.

Other selected characteristics of the nine projects that we believe have the strongest transition profiles are presented in table A.5. As seen in the table, there is considerable variation among the projects along several dimensions, such as type of co-sponsoring agency, anticipated number of families served, first year funding levels, role of Head Start in the project, and type of community (metropolitan versus non-metropolitan) served.

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[5]It is important to remember, however, that the information in table A.3 is based on how project staff answered the open-ended ESIS question on transition services. We have no way of knowing how complete and accurate those responses are.

B. SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

The second source of information for the site selection process is recommendations of sites to visit by individuals who are knowledgeable about Even Start projects.[6]

We learned from a representative of HIPPY USA that the HIPPY programs are strongly emphasizing transitions. Six Even Start projects that are using the HIPPY home-visiting model were recommended. These projects are located in Long Beach, California; Yonkers, New York; Brooklyn, New York; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Austin, Texas; and Rogers, Arizona. For comparison with the projects identified through the ESIS, we have displayed the characteristics of the HIPPY projects in the first five rows of tables A.6, A.7, and A.8.[7] These projects listed fewer transition services than those identified with the ESIS (see table A.3). It is possible that these projects have more recently focused on transitions. The HIPPY projects also tend to emphasize instructor-selected activities in their early childhood curricula more than the ESIS-selected projects.

To verify that the projects identified through the ESIS do have successful transition strategies, we contacted the state Even Start directors in charge of the projects that were identified through the ESIS. In all cases, the project director confirmed the projects' success with transitions. Two state directors confirmed that the projects we cited do very well with transitions but suggested other projects in their states that also do well and that they wanted us to consider. The Florida state director recommended that we visit the Pinellas County project and the North Carolina state director suggested that we consider visiting the Asheville City project. The characteristics of the Pinellas County and Asheville City projects are displayed in the last two rows of tables A.6, A.7, and A.8.

C. SELECTION OF SITES

Balancing the ESIS-based selection of potential projects to visit (tables A.3, A.4, and A.5) with the recommendations we received (tables A.6, A.7, and A.8), we selected five sites with promising transition strategies that, as a group, provide the greatest diversity. These projects are described below, with our rationales for including them. Characteristics of these projects are presented in tables I.1, I.2, and I.3 of the report.

- ***Kalamazoo Even Start.*** This project is the only one that, according to the ESIS data, provides all seven of the transition services we examined. Located in Kalamazoo, Michigan, it is primarily a home-based project that targets families in which there is a child under three years and the mother is 25 years or younger. Most participating children of preschool age attend Head Start or the state prekindergarten for at-risk children.

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[6]As stated in the Data Collection and Analysis Plan (Allin and Love 1995a), we started the process of obtaining recommendations by contacting researchers at Abt Associates and RMC Research Corporation who, because of their work on other projects related to the Even Start Program, might have been knowledgeable about Even Start projects. Unfortunately, they were not able to recommend projects because they were not familiar with the transition services provided by individual projects.

[7]We were not able to locate the Pittsburgh project in the ESIS, so it is not included in the table.

- ***Even Start "Links to Literacy."*** This project, located in Manchester, New Hampshire, is the only one for which a Head Start project is the co-sponsoring agency. The project is both home-based and center-based. Most participating preschool children attend Head Start or a preschool operated by the Even Start program staff.

- ***Yonkers Even Start.*** Because most of the projects we selected use a curriculum modeled after High/Scope, we wanted to visit one project that uses the HIPPY model. According to the ESIS data, of the projects recommended to us by the HIPPY representative, the Yonkers, New York and Long Beach, California Unified School District projects have implemented the most transition services. We selected the Yonkers project because it reported having implemented some of the less common services, such as facilitating meetings among teachers and parents. This project is primarily school-based. At the time of our visit, six public schools participated in the project, all of which have full-day prekindergarten programs.

- ***Carman-Ainsworth Even Start.*** Only two of the projects identified through the ESIS are located in non-metropolitan areas -- Carman-Ainsworth in Michigan and Family Literacy Opportunities Resources (FLOR) Even Start in California. Although both projects appear to have good transition strategies, we selected the Carman-Ainsworth project because (1) it is the only project for which Head Start is a primary service provider[8] and (2) the Carman-Ainsworth project is one of two projects (the other is Kalamazoo) that indicates that they provide joint inservice training, which is identified in the research literature as a successful transition service. The Carman-Ainsworth project is both home- and center-based. Project staff developed four semesters of a home-based curriculum for which participating adults can receive adult education credit. Even Start preschool age children participate in Head Start and a state-funded prekindergarten program for at-risk four-year-olds.

- ***Asheville City Schools (ACS) Preschool and Family Literacy Center.*** The ACS project and the Pinellas project were recommended to us by the Even Start state directors of North Carolina and Florida, respectively. For that reason, we wanted to visit one of them. Although both projects had good transition strategies, we selected the ACS project because it listed more of our selected transition services (four compared with three). The Asheville project is primarily center based. Children attend the city preschool while their parents attend adult education and parenting classes in the same building.

During our two-day visits to each of these projects (conducted in June 1995), we spoke with project staff, Even Start parents, prekindergarten teachers and administrators, and at least one school principal. During two of the site visits, we were also able to speak with kindergarten teachers. In addition, we obtained copies of project documents relevant to the study. After the visits were

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[8]The New Hampshire project lists Head Start as a co-sponsoring agency but indicates that Head Start is a secondary, rather than a primary, service provider.

completed, site visit reports were written for each project and submitted to the project director for comments to ensure that our descriptions of the projects were accurate.

TABLE A.1

SERVICES LISTED BY PROJECTS IN RESPONSE TO ESIS QUESTION ABOUT TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED

Transition Service Category	Percentage of Projects that List Service
1. Use developmentally appropriate practices.	27 percent
2. Encourage/facilitate parents' participation in school and school-related activities, including school orientation.	22 percent
3. Have Even Start staff act as intermediaries for children and families.	21 percent
4. Facilitate visit to kindergarten for incoming students, and/or schedule events where prekindergarten and kindergarten students can interact.	18 percent
5. Offer other required Even Start services, such as support, transportation, child care, and/or translation services.	17 percent
6. Facilitate parent/teacher meetings.	14 percent
7. Foster coordination/communication among prekindergarten, kindergarten, and Even Start staff.	14 percent
8. Provide readiness workshops.	12 percent
9. Instruct/help parents in their roles as their children's teachers.	11 percent
10. Offer summer programs for children.	7 percent
11. Transfer student records to receiving school.	6 percent
12. Perform tests/screenings.	5 percent
13. Hold prekindergarten and kindergarten classes in the same building.	3 percent
14. Offer supplemental, after-school enrichment program.	3 percent
15. Provide joint inservice training for prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers.	1 percent
16. Other.	13 percent

SOURCE: MPR calculations of PY93-94 project-level data from the Even Start Information System (ESIS).

NOTE: These calculations are based on the responses of the 431 projects for which the ESIS data contain information on transition services.

TABLE A.2

TRANSITION SERVICES CONSIDERED IN SITE SELECTION

1. Encourage/facilitate parents' participation in school and school-related activities and/or facilitate parents' participation in school orientation.
2. Have Even Start staff act as intermediaries for children and families.
3. Facilitate visit to kindergarten for incoming students and/or schedule events where prekindergarten and kindergarten students can interact.
4. Facilitate parent/teacher meetings.
5. Foster coordination/communication among prekindergarten, kindergarten, and Even Start staff.
6. Transfer student records to receiving school.
7. Provide joint inservice training for prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers.

TABLE A.3

POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR SITE VISITS: SELECTED SERVICES MENTIONED IN RESPONSE TO AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION REGARDING TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED

Project Name	State	Number of Selected Services Provided	Encourage/ Facilitate Parents' Involvement in School	Have Even Start Staff Work as Intermediaries for Children and Families	Facilitate Children's Visit to Kindergarten Classroom	Facilitate Meetings Among Parents and Kindergarten Teachers	Foster Coordination/Communication Among Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and Even Start Staff	Transfer Student Records to Receiving Teachers	Provide Joint Inservice Training
Family Literacy Opportunities Resources (FLOR) Even Start	CA	5	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Ft. Lauderdale Even Start	FL	4	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Emanuel County Even Start	GA	4	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Project Shaping Home Activities to Reveal Education (SHARE)	IL	4	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Carmen-Ainsworth Even Start	MI	6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Kalamazoo Even Start	MI	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
St. Joseph County Even Start	MI	4		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Richmond County Even Start	NC	4	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Even Start "Links to Literacy"	NH	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

TABLE A.4

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULA OF THE POTENTIAL SITE VISIT PROJECTS

Project Name	Degree to Which Project's Curriculum Exhibits these Characteristics: Individualized (Rather than Standardized)	Emphasizes Group Activities (Rather than Working Alone)	Emphasizes Learner-Selected (Rather than Instructor-Selected) Activities
FLOR Even Start	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High
Ft. Lauderdale Even Start	Medium/High	Medium	Medium
Emanuel County Even Start	High	Medium/Low	Medium
Project SHARE	High	Medium	Medium/High
Carman-Ainsworth Even Start	Medium	Medium/High	Medium
Kalamazoo Even Start	High	Medium/Low	Medium
St. Joseph County Even Start	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/Low
Richmond County Even Start	High	Medium	Medium/High
Even Start "Links to Literacy"	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/Low

SOURCE: Even Start Information System (ESIS) project-level data for PY93-94.

TABLE A.5

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL SITE VISIT PROJECTS

Project Name	Type of Co-Sponsoring Agency	First-Year Funding Level	Rural/Urban Community	Anticipated Number of Families Served in PY93-94	Number of Families on Waiting List	Program Model(s)	Head Start's Level of Involvement
FLOR Even Start	[1]	$217,000	Non-metro area	146	10	High/Scope, PAT[2], locally developed model	Secondary service provider
Ft. Lauderdale Even Start	Local, county, or state government agency	$299,521	Entire metro area	60	0	High/Scope, Kenan Trust, PACE,[3] locally developed model	Secondary service provider
Emanuel County Even Start	Trade or technical school	$172,233	Non-metro area	45	0	Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model	No involvement
Project SHARE	Community college, college, or university	$342,715	Entire metro area	90	25	High/Scope, PAT, STEP/PECES[4], Head Start, locally developed model	Secondary service provider
Carman-Ainsworth Even Start	Community college, college, or university	$144,471	Non-metro area	58	5	High/Scope, locally developed model	Primary service provider
Kalamazoo Even Start	Other community-based organization[5]	$162,528	Metro area--central city	25	0	High Scope, Parents as Partners in Reading, PAT, Portage home teaching, locally developed model	Secondary service provider
St. Joseph County Even Start	Community college, college, or university	$214,873	Metro and non-metro area combined	50	0	High/Scope, locally developed model	Secondary Service Provider
Richmond County Even Start	Community college, college, or university	$205,433	Non-metro area	22	0	Kenan Trust	Primary service provider

TABLE A.5 (*continued*)

Project Name	Type of Co-Sponsoring Agency	First-Year Funding Level	Rural/Urban Community	Anticipated Number of Families Served in PY93-94	Number of Families on Waiting List	Program Model(s)	Head Start's Level of Involvement
Even Start "Links to Literacy"	Head Start	$130,789	Entire metro area	35	70	High/Scope, Kenan Trust, locally developed model, Head Start	Secondary service provider

SOURCE: Even Start Information System (ESIS) project-level data for PY93-94.

[1]This information was missing from the ESIS.
[2]Parents as Teachers
[3]Parent and Child Education
[4]Systematic Training for Effective Parenting
[5]Advocacy group, women's shelter, ethnic or cultural group, or community action group.

TABLE A.6

RECOMMENDED SITES: SELECTED SERVICES MENTIONED IN RESPONSE TO AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION REGARDING TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED

Project Name	State	Number of Selected Services Provided	Encourage/ Facilitate Parents' Involvement in School	Have Even Start Staff Work as Intermediaries for Children and Families	Facilitate Children's Visit to Kindergarten Classroom	Facilitate Meetings Among Parents and Kindergarten Teachers	Foster Coordination/ Communication Among Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and Even Start Staff	Transfer Student Records to Receiving Teachers	Provide Joint Inservice Training
Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) Even Start Family Literacy Program[1]	CA	3	X	X	X				
Yonkers Even Start[1]	NY	3	X			X	X		
Even Start Family Literacy Program "Storybook"	NY	1					X		
Rogers Public Schools Even Start Program	AR	1			X				
Austin Even Start	TX	0							
Pinellas Even Start Literacy Project	FL	3			X		X	X	
Asheville City Schools (ACS) Preschool and Family Literacy Center	NC	4	X	X		X	X		

SOURCE: Even Start Information System (ESIS) project-level data for PY93-94.

[1]These projects have more than one site. We have included information on the site that appeared to have the most transition services.

TABLE A.7

RECOMMENDED SITES: CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Project Name	Degree to Which Project's Curriculum Exhibits these Characteristics: Individualized (Rather than Standardized)	Emphasizes Group Activities (Rather than Working Alone)	Emphasizes Learner-Selected (Rather than Instructor-Selected) Activities
LBUSD Even Start Family Literacy Program[1]	Medium/High	Medium	Medium
Yonkers Even Start[1]	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/Low
Even Start Family Literacy Program "Storybook"	Medium	Medium/High	Medium
Rogers Public Schools Even Start Program	Medium	Medium	Low
Austin Even Start	High	Medium	Medium
Pinellas Even Start Family Literacy Project	Medium	Medium	Medium
ACS Preschool and Family Literacy Center	High	Medium	Medium

SOURCE: Even Start Information System (ESIS) project-level data for PY93-94.

[1]These projects have more than one site. We have included information on the site that appeared to have the most transition services.

TABLE A.8

RECOMMENDED SITES: SELECTED PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

Project Name	Type of Co-Sponsoring Agency	First-Year Funding Level	Rural/Urban Community	Anticipated Number of Families Served in PY93-94	Number of Families on Waiting List	Program Model(s)	Head Start's Level of Involvement
LBUSD Even Start Family Literacy Program[1]	Community college, college, or university	$222,837	Metro area--central city	90	10	High/Scope, HIPPY	No involvement
Yonkers Even Start[1]	Other preschool or day care program	$369,347	Entire metro area	207	0	HIPPY, Kenan Trust, locally developed model, other model or program	No involvement
Even Start Family Literacy Program "Storybook"	[2]	$248,643	Metro area--central city	75	0	Kenan Trust, HIPPY, locally developed model, STEP/PECES[3]	Secondary service provider
Rogers Public Schools Even Start Program	Other community-based organization[4]	$45,000	Non-metro area	60	50	High/Scope, PAT,[5] HIPPY, STEP/PECES	Secondary service provider
Austin Even Start	[2]	$222,379	Metro area--central city	100	0	High/Scope, STEP/PECES, Portage home teaching model	Secondary service provider
Pinellas Even Start Family Literacy Project	Volunteer group	$187,564	Entire metro area	70	35	High/Scope, Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model, Head Start	Secondary service provider
ACS Preschool and Family Literacy Center	Community college, college, or university	$98,608	Metro area--central city	50	10	High/Scope, PAT	No involvement

SOURCE: Even Start Information System (ESIS) project-level data for PY93-94.

[1]These projects have more than one site. We have included information on the site that appeared to have the most transition services.
[2]This information was missing from the ESIS.
[3]Systematic Training for Effective Parenting
[4]Advocacy group, women's shelter, ethnic or cultural group, or community action group.
[5]Parents as Teachers

BEST COPY AVAILABLE